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Tech glitches mar Day 1 of caste census in Karnataka

Vokkaliga leaders meet Kharge, seek survey's postponement

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

The Social and Educational Survey, popularly referred to as the 'caste census', commenced across Karnataka on Monday, with over 1.75 lakh government school teachers deployed as enumerators to cover around 7 crore people in nearly 2 crore households.

While the survey began smoothly in most regions, technical glitches and server issues disrupted operations in parts of Shivamogga, Haveri, Ballari, Chitradurga, and Kodagu. Officials confirmed that surveys resumed after localised fixes. In Greater Bengaluru, the process may face a one to two day delay due to recent corporation formations and training requirements.

The Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes is leading the Rs 420 crore exercise, using a 60-question questionnaire. The commission aims to submit its report by December 2025.

PHOTO: AI

Each household will be geo-tagged using electricity meter numbers and given a Unique Household ID (UHID). Aadhaar and ration card details will also be linked to mobile numbers. Citizens unavailable during the visit can call 8050770004 or complete the survey online.

Controversy has erupted over dual-identity caste names (eg, 'Kuruba Christian', 'Brahmin Christian'). The Commission said such names have been masked but not removed from the internal handbook. Chairman Madhusudan R Naik clarified that the list is for enumerator reference only, not legally binding.

Major communities are strategising to consolidate numbers. Vokkaliga seers have urged followers to declare their caste simply as 'Vokkaliga' and religion as 'Hindu'. Some Veerashaiva-Lingayat leaders suggested recording the community name as a religion, prompting debate.

A delegation of Vokkaliga Congress leaders met AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, seeking the postponement of the survey.

The earlier 2015 caste survey, which cost Rs 165.51 crore, was discarded after criticism.

A fresh enumeration was approved in June. *—PTI*

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International Booker Prize-winning writer Banu Mushta and CM Siddaramaiah during the inauguration of the 'Mysuru Dasara' at Chamundi Hills in Mysuru on Monday *PHOTO: SALAR*

Celebrations kick-off as Banu inaugurates Dasara

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

International Booker Prize-winning writer Banu Mushtaq silenced critics on Monday by inaugurating the Mysuru Dasara atop Chamundi Hills, amid tight security and political controversy.

Clad in a Mysuru silk saree, Mushtaq offered pooja to Goddess Chamundeshwari alongside Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and a host of ministers. She launched the 11-day celebrations by showering flowers on the deity, following full temple tradition.

Amid slogans of Jai Hind, Jai Karnataka, Jai Constitution, Mushtaq stressed religious tolerance, communal harmony, and democratic values. "Chamundeshwari symbolises strength in womanhood," she said, adding that culture bridges hearts and celebrates unity in diversity.

> **As the world surges ahead on a warpath and humanity is fuelled by hatred, Mysuru Dasara is a clarion call for peace and harmony**
> —Banu Mushtaq, Booker winner

Facing criticism for her faith, Mushtaq affirmed her deep-rooted connection with Indian traditions, noting past participation in Hindu rituals. She revealed that a friend had vowed to bring her to the temple if she won the Booker Prize, a wish now fulfilled.

Mushtaq remembered Mysuru Maharajas and Dr BR Ambedkar for their contributions to equality and social justice. She highlighted how her uncle served as a bodyguard to Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, showing the trust placed in Muslims.

Tight security marked the event, with access restricted to pass holders following threats. Mushtaq was escorted in a special van under police protection.

Calling Dasara a symbol of Karnataka's collective culture, she urged people to uphold the values of democracy, promote peace over hate, and respect all faiths.

"Let this land be a symphony of harmony and unity. We are all travellers under one sky— it doesn't differentiate, and nor should we," she concluded. *—Salar News*

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Karnataka fixes salaries for Jain priests

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

The Karnataka government has approved fixed salaries for priests serving in Jain temples across the state. According to a statement issued by Minority Affairs Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan's office, chief priests of 1,043 Jain temples will receive Rs 6,000 per month, while assistant priests will be paid Rs 5,000 each. The decision, announced in the state budget, follows proposals received from districts, all of which have been approved by the minister. Alongside the move, Khan also sanctioned Rs 1 crore for the development of the Mahabodhi Society in Gandhi Nagar, Bengaluru. *—PTI*

AIR STRIKES BY GOVT ALLEGED

24 killed in Pak's Khyber after 'blast' at militant compound

PESHAWAR, 22 SEPT

At least 24 people, including women and children, were killed and several others injured on Monday when explosive materials stored at a compound owned by the Pakistani Taliban exploded in northwest Pakistan, police said.

The residents, however, claimed that air strikes hit the compound in Tirah Valley's Matur Dara area in Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, bordering Afghanistan. No official statement has been issued by the government regarding the tragedy.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's provincial branch claimed that the "jet bombing" in the Tirah Valley destroyed five houses. It said that 20 bodies have been recovered from the rubble.

The local administration denied the claims about aerial strikes by the Pakistani fighter jets on the compound, saying the explosives used in bomb making exploded, causing the death of 24 people, including 14 militants.

At least 10 civilians, including women and children, were killed, along with 14 militants in the explosion, Station House Officer, Tirah police Station, Zafar Khan said.

The compound had been home to a large number of local militant leaders and operatives, including dozens of Afghan fighters. It was regarded as a hub for the production of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and sniper training.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed concern over civilian casualties in alleged "aerial bombings" in the Tirah Valley and called for an immediate inquiry.

"The HRCP is deeply shocked to learn that a number of civilians, including children, have been killed, allegedly as a result of aerial bombing in Tirah," the Rights body posted on X. *—PTI*

S-400 air defence missiles proved very effective during Operation Sindoor in May, which targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan *PHOTO: X*

India to get Russian S-400s by 2026

MOSCOW, 22 SEPT

Under a USD 5.43 billion deal signed in 2018, Russia is set to complete deliveries of the S-400 Triumf air defence systems to India next year, according to a TASS report. A defence source confirmed that four of the five systems have already been delivered, with the fifth expected in 2026.

The agreement, signed on 5 October, 2018, went ahead despite potential US sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), signed by President Donald Trump during his first term. In March 2021, US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin warned that India's purchase of the S-400 could trigger penalties.

However, so far the US has not invoked CAATSA, as the S-400 deal has not been formally completed.

During a visit to Moscow to attend the V-Day parade at Red Square, Minister of State Sanjay Seth noted S-400 air defence missiles proved very effective during Operation Sindoor in May, which targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians. The cross-border conflict ended on May 10 after four days of drone and missile strikes.

Seth added that India is exploring the possibility of acquiring more advanced S-500 missile systems, signaling continued investment in modern air defence capabilities.

The completion of the S-400 deal in 2026 will mark a significant milestone in India-Russia defence cooperation. *—PTI*

HC to hear Newslaundry, Ravish over Adani gag

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Delhi High Court will consider the pleas of digital news platform Newslaundry and senior journalist Ravish Kumar challenging the Centre's purported direction asking digital news publishers to take down multiple reports and videos concerning Adani Group of Companies. Justice Sachin Datta has set the date for hearing as 25 September after hearing the matter briefly today.

A Delhi court on 18 September set aside an civil judge's order asking four journalists to take down alleged defamatory content against Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL), saying the effect of removal of the articles by an ad interim ex-parte order was "sweeping" and it had the "effect of decreeing the suit itself without a trial". The civil judge had directed 10 defendants, including the four journalists, to take down the contentious material, like articles and social media posts, already published on various platforms, including websites, within a stipulated period.

The petitioners said the plea was not on merit, since the trial court was already scheduled to hear the matter on 23 September against an interim order. Meanwhile, the counsel representing the Central government, said the Centre "communicated" the order passed by the court, and did not pass any order. *—PTI*

EAM, Rubio hold talks in New York

NEW YORK, 22 SEPT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for bilateral discussions, as the high-level 80th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) kicks in.

The meeting at Lotte New York Palace is the first face-to-face interaction between them following President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs on India.

Their meeting takes place on the same day India and the US will hold discussions to achieve a trade agreement. A delegation led by Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal will meet with the US side on Monday in the city.

Reportedly, the last visit of US trade officials to India on 16 September led to positive discussions. Jaishankar, arrived in New York on Sunday, He will hold a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings on the sidelines of the session and will deliver the national statement on 27 September. *—PTI*

'IRRESPONSIBLE, BUILDS NARRATIVE'

SC flays DGCA for 'selective' release of AI plane crash report

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday termed as "unfortunate and irresponsible" the selective publication of a preliminary report on the 12 June Air India crash which outlined lapses on the part of pilots and paved way for a "media narrative". Two-hundred-and-sixty-five people, including 241 passengers and crew on board, died in the crash.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh, which issued notices to the Centre and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on the aspect of an independent, fair and expeditious probe of the crash, said an element of privacy and dignity of families of victims was also involved.

It took note of certain aspects of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) preliminary report issued on 12 July and said "piecemeal and selective" publication of the findings which led to building of a media narrative was "unfortunate and irresponsible".

"There should be complete confidentiality of reports of this nature till the inquiry is complete. There is an element of privacy and dignity of the victims involved. That's why we should wait for the final report," the bench observed.

> While cautioning that releasing a particular information might be exploited by rival airlines, the bench said such information should not be released prematurely.

While cautioning that releasing a particular information might be exploited by rival airlines, the bench suggested such information should not be released prematurely. *—PTI*

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SC wants defamation to be decriminalised

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday took offense at the rising use of criminal defamation clause in the country and said that "the time has come" to look into decriminalising the colonial-era law.

The bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Satish Chandra Sharma made the remark saying the law was being used by individuals and political parties to "get even".

The court was hearing a petition challenging summons issued to online news portal The Wire in connection with a defamation case filed by professor Amita Singh of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). It issued a notice to the professor on a plea moved by the Foundation for Independent Journalism, which runs The Wire. The court questioned how long this case will be dragged since it was registered in 2016. "How long will you go on dragging this?" it was quoted.

Singh had filed this defamation case against The Wire in 2016, following which a magistrate had issued summons to the news website in February 2017. Last year, the top court set aside the summons and asked the magistrate to take a fresh call in the matter. *—Agencies*

'Kantara: Chapter 1' set for 2 October release

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

The prequel to Rishab Shetty's acclaimed 2022 National Award-winning film 'Kantara,' titled 'Kantara: Chapter 1,' is scheduled to hit theatres on 2 October. Hombale Films unveiled the film's highly anticipated trailer, describing it as "the prologue to the legend, the beginning of Kantara" and a tribute to the land and people behind its creation. The film boasts a war sequence featuring over 500 skilled fighters and approximately 3,000 participants, crafted by national and international specialists. Alongside Shetty, the cast includes Rukmini Vasanth, Jayaram, Gulshan Devaiah, and Pramod Shetty. *—PTI*

Cops thwart illegal cow slaughter in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 22 SEPT

Police have successfully thwarted an illegal cow slaughter operation in Sangabettu village of Dakshina Kannada district in the State, rescuing nine cattle and arresting one suspect. Following a tip-off, authorities raided a shed in Bantwal taluk where a group was allegedly slaughtering a cow with knives and machetes. Upon their arrival, most suspects fled, but Tausif from Krishnapura was apprehended. Investigations revealed the group had already slaughtered a six-year-old cow without the necessary permits. The rescued cattle were taken to a goshala, while police seized an autorickshaw linked to the operation. A case has been registered under multiple acts, and Tausif has been remanded to judicial custody. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Onam festival 'Aghosham 2.0' celebrated in State

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

The Aghosham 2.0 Onam Festival Celebration 2025 was organised by ACS with Dr. Vaishnavi Kuppaswamy, KAS, Special Officer to the Chief Minister, as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kuppaswamy said Onam symbolises Kerala's rich traditions, including Vallam Kali, and recalls the return of King Mahabali, whose reign was marked by peace and prosperity. The festival culminated on Thiru Onam day with prayers, lamp lighting, cultural programmes, a musical evening by Libin Zakaria, sports events, and other activities. Tony Vincent, Sunitha Tony, Vincent Tony, and Vijay Vincent Tony were present. *—Salar News*

Comic Con returns to City on 20 & 21 Dec

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Comic Con India has confirmed the return of its Bengaluru edition in December, marking its 13th edition on the 20th and 21st. This annual pop-culture festival is expected to unite cosplayers, gamers, artists, and performance enthusiasts in India's Silicon Valley. The event provides a platform for aspiring creators to connect with fans and industry professionals, with highlights such as the National Cosplay Championship, exclusive merchandise, and immersive fan zones. Akshat Rathee, Co-founder and MD of NODWIN Gaming, remarked on City. Shefali Johnson, CEO of Comic Con India, added, "The City's energy is collaborative...it feels like a festival woven into the city's own culture of ideas and innovation." Last year's event attracted over 50,000 attendees and 5,000 cosplayers. *—PTI*

The Dasara festivities begin! The government put together a stunning flower show spread over 10 acres at Kuppanna Park in Mysuru featuring 60,000 flowering plants; The 'City of Palaces' came alive with grand lighting to mark the commencement of the occasion; Artistes dance during a procession at Gokarnanatheshwara Temple, in Mangaluru on Monday *PHOTOS: SALAR/PTI*

Nada Habba is secular: CM defends Banu

Says people have accepted her & she brought respect to State

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday defended his government's decision to invite International Booker Prize winner writer Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara, and said majority people of the State have accepted it.

He said Dasara is not a festival of any one religion or caste, it is a festival of all. It is "Nada Habba" (State festival), the festival of the people.

The famous 11-day Dasara celebrations commenced in the 'City of Palaces' on Monday with religious and traditional fervour, after Mushtaq inaugurated it.

"Mushtaq may be a Muslim woman by birth, but she is a human being first. Humans should love and respect each other and there should be no hate based on one's caste and religion, as it is not the characteristic of humanity," Siddaramaiah said.

Addressing the gathering after the inauguration of Mysuru Dasara, he said, "If we accept humanity, we should accept people belonging to any caste, religion or class --participating in the celebration of Nada Habba. Majority of the people of this State have accepted Banu Mushtaq inaugurating Dasara."

"Mushtaq inaugurating Dasara this year is a right decision and it is something that has brought respect for Karnataka. So I congratulate Mushtaq on behalf of the people and the government," he added.

Appreciating Mushtaq's inaugural address, Siddaramaiah said, even he cannot speak like her.

"She has spoken aptly and meaningfully in the given situation, being a poet, writer and the inaugurator. I hope everyone has understood her message. Probably she has opened the eyes of even those who opposed her, even those who opposed her are happy internally," he said, as he lauded her work being part of a farmer organisation, as an activist, Kannada writer and poet.

Noting that Dasara celebration was started by kings of the Vijayanagara empire and after its collapse, he said, Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan too celebrated Dasara during their rule over Mysuru in Srirangapatna. "People should know the history. Distorting history, doing things for the sake of selfishness and politics is an unpardonable offence," he said. *—PTI*

Yaduveer holds Royal Khas Durbar

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

The Mysuru royal family, led by Yaduveer Wadiyar, started the 11 days private Dasara festival at the Mysuru Palace early Monday morning. The highlight of the day was the Khas Durbar when Yaduveer symbolically held the durbar (court).

This is the first Dasara festival for Yaduveer and Trishikha Devi Wadiyar's second son Yugadhyaksh Krishnaraja Wadiyar.

Royal family matriarch Pramoda Devi Wadiyar supervised the celebrations. Maharani Trisikha Kumari also performed various poojas and rituals before the Khas Darbar. *—Salar News*

Mysuru Royal Family member and BJP MP Yaduveer Wadiyar held a Khas Durbar *PHOTO: SALAR*

HC to hear plea against caste survey on 23 Sept

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

The Karnataka High Court on Monday said it will hear on 23 September arguments on whether the ongoing Socio-Economic and Educational Survey, being carried out by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, should be stayed.

When a batch of petitions challenging the legality of the survey came up before a division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi on 22 Sept, the court initially suggested that the matter could be taken up after the Dasara vacation.

However, counsel for the petitioners argued that the issue was urgent, pointing out that the exercise involves geo-tagging residents and linking their details with Aadhaar, which they claim violates privacy rights and runs contrary to the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016. They also questioned the State government's authority to conduct such a survey.

The court asked the advocate representing the government whether the collection of data could be deferred till the petitions are adjudicated by it, after Dasara vacation for the courts.

Responding, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the State government, said the current survey is only an update of an earlier one which was not stayed by the court. He maintained that the data could be discarded if the survey were later invalidated.

The bench expressed skepticism, asking how the data collection could be "reversed" once completed. *—PTI*

Kalaburagi girl dies after wall collapses; 4 kids injured

KALABURAGI, 22 SEPT

One teenage girl died and four children were seriously injured when a wall collapsed due to heavy rains in Yadrami town in Kalaburagi around 2.30am on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Sania Saipansab Tamboli, 16, of Yadrami town. The girl's siblings Mahibub Tamboli, Nishad Tamboli, Aisha Tamboli and Ramajanabi Tamboli were injured in the incident.

They were trapped beneath the wall which collapsed in the heavy rains. While the children were rescued with minor injuries, Sania who was seriously injured was rushed to Yadrami Taluk Hospital, where she died. Eyewitnesses said that there was no doctor in the hospital who could treat her, which resulted in her death. Yadrami Tahsildar Yallappa Subedar told Salar News that a compensation Rs 5 lakh would be paid to the family of the deceased within three days. *—Salar News*

The collapsed wall in Yadrami town of Kalaburagi district. Eyewitnesses reported that there were no doctors, resulting in the death *PHOTO: SALAR*

Passenger breaks into cockpit on AI Express flight

MUMBAI/ VARANASI, 22 SEPT

A passenger aboard a Varanasi-bound Air India Express flight from the City attempted to access the cockpit mid-air while searching for the lavatory, prompting an immediate investigation by the airline.

Air India Express stated, "We are aware of reports of an incident on one of our flights to Varanasi, where a passenger approached the cockpit entry area while looking for the lavatory. We reaffirm that robust safety and security protocols are in place and were not compromised."

Upon landing, the situation was reported to the relevant authorities. In Varanasi, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel detained the man and his eight companions, all of whom are residents of Bengaluru and were en route to Varanasi for a pilgrimage.

SHO Praveen Kumar Singh confirmed, "The man had attempted to open the cockpit door during the flight. He was arrested on landing and handed over to us. All nine individuals are being interrogated, and further action will be taken based on findings." Legal procedures are currently underway. *—PTI*

Justice Surya Kant's bench to hear assets case against DKS, says SC

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday said a bench led by Justice Surya Kant would hear pleas challenging State's decision to withdraw consent to investigate a disproportionate assets case against Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran noted that the pleas were earlier dealt by another bench headed by Justice Surya Kant.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Congress leader, said the CJI earlier said that political scores should be settled elsewhere and not in courts.

The CJI said that it would be in the best interest of justice, if the pleas are heard by another bench and directed that they be listed before Justice Surya Kant-led bench.

In October last year, the CBI moved the top court against the State government's decision to withdraw its consent to the probe agency for investigating the DA case against Shivakumar.

The apex court sought responses from Shivakumar and the State government.

On 17 September, last year, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan had issued notices to Shivakumar and the State government.

The current State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 23 November, 2023, held the previous BJP government's 2019 move to give consent to the CBI to investigate the DA case against Shivakumar was not in accordance with law and decided to withdraw the sanction as a result.

The CBI alleged that Shivakumar amassed assets disproportionate between 2013 and 2018. *—PTI*

DISPROPORTIONATE ASSETS

Bagalkot mutt locked after expelling seer

BAGALKOT, 22 SEPT

After Basava Jayabrutunjaya swami of Panchamsali mutt at Kudalasangama was expelled from the seer's post on Sunday evening, the mutt's branch mutt at Bagalkote was locked on Monday morning.

All India Lingayat Panchamsali Trust president Vijaayanand Kashaappanar at a news conference on Monday, said the swamy was expelled after he was found violating the bylaws of the trust and other norms.

According to norms, the seer of the Mutt should not have any property. However, the swamy had purchased houses at Belagavi, Hubballi and in City. He also has other assets, Kashaappanar said, promising that the records would be released soong.

He alleged that the swamy was also acting to favour a political party which was trying to end the Panchamsali's movement on getting reservation. The movement also sought for the community to be listed as Hindu in religion section and Lingayat in the caste column. *—Salar News*

WITH GST REDUCTION

Many Nandini products get cheaper

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Now you can get some of the 'Nandini' milk products like ghee, butter, paneer, at a reduced rate with the GST on them coming down from Monday.

In a statement, the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has listed the revised prices of 'Nandini' milk products due to the slash in Goods and Services Tax (GST) levied on dairy products.

"The Government of India has reduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on essential food products like Ghee, Paneer, Cheese, Ice creams, Chocolates etc. and the reduction is effective from 22.09.2025. Accordingly, Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has revised the selling prices of 'Nandini' milk products," it stated.

Council Opposition leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy and BJP leaders celebrate the GST simplification by distributing sweets, at Malleshwaram in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

According to the list, 1000ml Ghee (pouch) which was earlier priced at Rs 650 will now be available at Rs 610, Butter (Unsalted) 500gm which was Rs 305 will now be Rs 286, Paneer (1000gm) which was Rs 425 will be now Rs 408, Goodlife milk (1000ml) which was Rs 70 will now be Rs 68, processed cheese (1kg) which was Rs 530 will now be Rs 497, Cheese - Mozzarella diced (1kg) which was Rs 480 will be Rs 450 now.

In addition, Ice creams - Vanilla tub (1000ml) which was priced at Rs 200 will now be available at Rs 178, Savouries (180gm) which was Rs 60 will now be Rs 56, Muffins (150gms) which was Rs 50 will now be Rs 45, among other items, it added. *—PTI*

Cong MLC Saleem hints at Cabinet reshuffle in Nov

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Senior Congress leader and MLC Saleem Ahmed on Monday indicating about the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle in November, with the Karnataka government completing 2.5 years in office, said the party leadership has been requested to give opportunity to new faces.

Stating that he too is a ministerial aspirant, the Government Chief Whip in the Legislative Council said he had faced "injustice" during the previous cabinet exercise.

"In November, our government will complete 2.5 years in office, cabinet expansion (reshuffle) will happen. We have already told the leadership, the chief minister, senior leaders that 50 per cent of the ministers should be given the party responsibility and new people should be given an opportunity, thereby strengthening both party organisation and the government," Ahmed said. "We are confident that the reshuffle will happen in November."

Stating that he has won the MLC polls from Kittu Karnataka region districts of Gadag, Dharwad and Haveri districts, he further said, "no minority person from the Kittur Karnataka region has been given an opportunity in the last 20 years..."

"Injustice had happened to me," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

'Bads of B'wood': NHRC raps Ranbir's e-cigarette scene

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Mumbai Police following a complaint over a scene in the Netflix web series 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood'. The episode allegedly showed actor Ranbir Kapoor using a banned e-cigarette without any warning or disclaimer, potentially influencing viewers. The complainant, Vinay Joshi of the Legal Rights Observatory, urged strict action against the actor, producers, and Netflix for violating laws and promoting harmful content. The NHRC directed authorities to investigate this and submit an action taken report within two weeks. The case cites violations of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019. *—PTI*

Andhra Pradesh plans new Heritage Tourism policy

AMARAVATI, 22 SEPT

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh said the state is set to introduce a new heritage tourism policy to preserve and promote historic buildings while boosting tourism. The policy will strengthen structures with modern technology without altering their original character, turning them into heritage centres. Examples include the 19th-century Town Hall in Rajahmundry. In addition, the government plans "tent cities" for river festivals like Pushkarams, offering sustainable accommodations. The 2024-29 tourism policy grants industry incentives to tourism, along with a homestay and land allotment policy to encourage public-private tie-ups. He highlighted investment opportunities across hotels, resorts, eco-tourism, and cultural heritage sites. *—PTI*

Sena leader meets Raj, downplays poll defeat

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

Former Shiv Sena MLA Sada Sarvankar met Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray on 22 September during the reopening of Shivaji Park Gymkhana after its makeover. Both Sarvankar and Thackeray's son Amit contested the 2024 assembly elections from Mahim but lost to Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Mahesh Sawant. Despite past tensions, Sarvankar described his relationship with Raj Thackeray as "deep" and said they can "forget our ties," adding that the election outcome was "a different issue." Shivaji Park falls under the Mahim assembly constituency. The event was attended by Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders, including local MP Anil Desai and MLA Mahesh Sawant, highlighting cordial interactions between rival party leaders. *—PTI*

Rahul, Kharge to attend CWC meeting in Patna

PATNA, 22 SEPT

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi will attend the party's Working Committee (CWC) meeting on 24 September in Patna, AICC Bihar in-charge Krishna Allavaru announced. The meeting, to be held at historic Sadaqat Ashram, comes as Congress intensifies its campaign in Bihar, calling it "the second war of Independence." All CWC members, along with chief ministers of Congress-ruled states, are expected to participate. Allavaru criticized the BJP-led central government over alleged "vote theft" and praised Gandhi's recent 1,300-km Voter Adhikar Yatra. Discussions on seat-sharing within the INDIA alliance will continue, with the chief ministerial candidate decision to be taken collectively by alliance partners. *—PTI*

New GST reforms to boost savings: Modi

PM pens letter to nation, hails GST reform

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the next generation GST reforms will boost savings and directly benefit every section of society, as he asserted that it is imperative to walk on the path of self-reliance to achieve the collective goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

In an open letter to Indians which he posted on X, Modi said that from 22 September, the next generation GST reforms have begun to make their presence felt, marking the start of a 'GST Bachat Utsav' or 'GST Savings Festival' across the country.

"This year, the festive season brings an added reason to rejoice. These reforms will boost savings and directly benefit every section of society, be it farmers, women, youth, poor, middle class, traders or MSMEs. They will encourage greater growth and investments and accelerate the progress of every state and region," the prime minister said.

An important feature of the next generation GST reforms is that there will mainly be two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent, he said.

"Daily essentials such as food, medicines, soap, toothpaste, insurance and many more items will now either be tax-free or fall in the lowest 5% tax slab. Goods that were earlier taxed at 12% have almost entirely shifted to 5%. ," Modi said in his letter to the people.

IN ITANAGAR

Taking potshots at the Congress, Modi said that the Opposition Party had an "inherent habit" of abandoning any development work that is difficult, and this caused significant harm to the Northeast.

Addressing a rally at Indira Gandhi Park in Itanagar after unveiling development projects worth over Rs 5,100 crore, Modi hailed the GST reforms, stating that people would receive a "double bonanza" this festive season.

He said he knew that the Northeast couldn't be developed from Delhi, and so, he sent ministers and officers more frequently to the region, and himself came here more than 70 times. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

TEEN PROTESTS AT PM'S EVENT

A brief disruption marked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public address in Arunachal Pradesh on Monday when a 17-year-old youth, identified as Higio Obin, was detained by security personnel for waving a protest banner from the crowd. The banner carried by the teenager read, "Stop hunger strike, give Ladakh their rights." The incident occurred shortly after the PM inaugurated and laid foundation stones for two major hydropower projects in Shi Yomi district and highlighted the Centre's commitment to boosting infrastructure and connectivity in the Northeast. Authorities said the protester was quickly escorted out of the venue and the programme resumed without further interruptions. *—PTI*

Will GST cut benefit buyers, asks Oppn

Didi says Centre financially burdened states

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

With reduced GST rates on several items coming into effect, the Congress on Monday said the "limited" reform comes eight years too late and a "big question mark" remains on whether the benefits of tax reduction will be passed on to consumers.

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) was established under Section 171 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, to monitor whether GST rate cuts resulted in the reduction of consumer prices but was rendered "toothless" by the Narendra Modi government with a notification issued of 30 September 2024.

"It should not be a case of 'vote chori' on one hand and 'munafakhori (profiteering)' on the other hand with the people not getting the benefits of the GST reduction," Ramesh said. He also claimed that "procedural complexities" have not been eased in the reforms despite the fact that it was much needed.

Ramesh pointed out that at the very launch of GST in 2017, Rahul Gandhi and the Congress had pointed out the problems and asserted that what was brought in was the "Gabbar Singh Tax".

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the Centre of having passed the financial burden to states after lowering GST and taking "undue credit" for it. After inaugurating a Durga Puja here, Banerjee said that though the state is set to incur Rs 20,000 crore as revenue loss due to the lowering of GST, she welcomed the decision as it will benefit the common man.

COMPENSATION SOUGHT

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday demanded that the Central government compensate for the loss of revenues due to the recent GST rate rationalisation, for five years.

Addressing a press conference, Reddy reminded that when GST was introduced, the Centre had promised to compensate for revenue losses if the tax growth rate fell below 14 per cent. "Now also, if there is any revenue fall due to the change in slabs, the Central government should fill that gap," Reddy said.

AAVIN PRICES SLASHED

Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu state-owned enterprise Aavin has slashed the prices of ghee and announced that the prices for its other products will be revised in accordance with the 'GST 2.0', coming into effect from Monday.

The DMK, however, has demanded a roll-back of the GST, while the BJP here said the comprehensive overhaul of the GST, coming into effect with the commencement of Navarathri festival, was a "gift" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. *—PTI*

- Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, said the National Anti-profiteering Authority was established under Section 171 to monitor whether GST rate cuts resulted in the reduction of consumer prices but was rendered "toothless" by the Modi government.

AIDE OF PANNUN

Canada arrests Khalistani terrorist Inderjit Singh Gosal

OTTAWA, 22 SEPT

ICanadian authorities have arrested Khalistani terrorist Inderjit Singh Gosal, a close aide of US-based separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, in Ottawa. Gosal, 36, was detained on multiple charges linked to firearms possession. His arrest comes amid renewed efforts by India and Canada to cooperate on counterterrorism and transnational crime.

Gosal, a key organiser for the banned group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) in Canada, rose in prominence following the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023. He has long been considered Pannun's right-hand man and previously worked as his personal security officer.

This is Gosal's second arrest within a year. In November 2024, Peel Regional Police detained him in connection with a violent attack on worshippers at a Hindu temple in the Greater Toronto Area. Though released on conditions, he continued to play a central role in organising the so-called Khalistan referendum in Canada.

Pannun, who holds dual US-Canadian citizenship, was declared an "individual terrorist" by India's Ministry of Home Affairs in July 2020, a year after SFJ was banned. Authorities in India have registered over 100 cases against him and the outfit, including nearly 60 in Punjab alone.

The latest arrest is seen as a shift in Ottawa's earlier tolerance of separatist groups under the pretext of free speech. It follows high-level talks between Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Canadian counterpart Nathalie Drouin, aimed at repairing bilateral relations strained since 2023. . *—PTI*

'Vijay should join AIADMK, can't win alone'

SIVAKASI, 22 SEPT

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam chief, actor-politician Vijay should join hands with the AIADMK to defeat the DMK and dislodge it from the seat of power, senior AIADMK leader KT Rajenthra Bhalaji said on Monday.

Speaking to reporters, Bhalaji said Vijay aspiring to win elections by going it all alone will never fructify. "It will not happen now, and it will not happen at any point in time and such efforts, aimed at

winning polls on his own will only go waste," Bhalaji, a former minister claimed.

If Vijay has to get "pass mark," he has to join hands with the AIADMK and unless he strikes an electoral alliance with the opposition party, the DMK will end Vijay's political ambitions.

Meanwhile, Makkal Needhi Maiam founder leader Kamal Haasan said that just because a leader happens to attract huge crowds does not mean that the entire turnout will get converted into votes and this norm applies to all including him and actor-politician Vijay, who heads the fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam.

Haasan, when asked on the massive turnout seen in actor-politician Vijay's rallies, and the criticism that the "entire crowds" will not get converted into votes, told reporters: "It is for sure, (not all of them) will get converted into votes, it is applicable to all leaders."

When asked again if this norm is applicable to TVK chief Vijay, he said: "When it is applicable to all leaders, how can we exclude Vijay? It is applicable to me and all the leaders in India, you have attracted crowd but (all of) that will not get converted into votes." *—PTI*

IN OPERATION SINDOOR

Armed forces were given complete freedom: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India's armed forces were granted full autonomy to respond to the terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam. Speaking to the Indian community in Rabat, Morocco, Singh described the response to the attack as "measured and non-escalatory."

"We took action not based on religion but on deeds (Humne dharm dekh kar nahi, karm dekh kar maara hai)," Singh quoted from the Ramcharitmanas to emphasise India's firm yet restrained approach following the 22 April attack.

PHOTO: PTI

INDIA, MOROCCO INK DEFENCE PACT

India and Morocco on Monday inked an agreement to boost military cooperation following talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Moroccan counterpart Abdeltif Loudiyi.

The MoU will provide for an institutional framework to expand and deepen bilateral defence engagement, including exchanges, training, and industrial linkages, officials said. Singh's visit to Morocco is the first-ever trip to that country by an Indian defence minister.

Ties between India and Morocco have gained momentum since 2015. *—PTI*

HC bench recuses from hearing on Maratha quota

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

A division bench of the Bombay High Court has recused itself from hearing petitions challenging the Maharashtra government's decision to issue Kunbi caste certificates to members of the Maratha community for reservation purposes. Five petitions were filed by individuals from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), asserting that granting Kunbi caste status to Marathas would erroneously categorise them as OBCs.

The petitions were presented before Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Sandesh Patil. Justice Patil declined to proceed with the case, leading the bench to recuse itself without divulging any specific reasons. The cases will be heard by Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad in due course.

The Kunbi Sena, along with four other organisations, argued that the government's move was "arbitrary, unconstitutional and bad in law." They claim the resolutions have muddled the criteria for issuing certificates for Kunbi, Kunbi Maratha, and Maratha Kunbi, potentially leading to "utter chaos." This decision follows a hunger strike by quota activist Manoj Jarange, aimed at advocating for Maratha inclusion in OBC benefits. *—PTI*

AFTER HC ORDER

UP bans caste-based political rallies, stickers and signboards

LUCKNOW, 22 SEPT

Uttar Pradesh government announced a ban on caste references in police documents, public spaces, and official formats, following a directive from the Allahabad High Court. The ruling described caste glorification as "anti-national" and in violation of constitutional morality.

In an order from Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar, all departments have been instructed that caste will no longer feature in FIRs, arrest memos, or other police documents. Identification will now rely on the names of parents instead. The order also mandates that caste symbols and slogans be removed from police noticeboards, vehicles, and signboards, while rallies based on caste will be prohibited.

The government stated that exceptions would apply to cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, where caste identification is legally required. To ensure compliance with the court's order, amendments will be made to police manuals.

The High Court emphasised that the recording of caste in police documentation equates to identity profiling rather than objective investigation, reinforcing prejudice. Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav said , "What will be done to eliminate caste bias entrenched for 5,000 years in the mind?" He questioned how deeper societal issues linked to caste discrimination, including practices that enforce caste-based discrimination, would be addressed. Agecnies *—Agencies*

PHOTO: AI

Two top Naxals killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

NARAYANPUR, 22 SEPT

Two prominent Maoist leaders, each with a bounty of Rs 40 lakh, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh, on Monday. The deceased have been identified as Raju Dada alias Katta Ramachandra Reddy, 63 and Kosa Dada alias Kadari Satyanarayana Reddy, 67, both members of the Central Committee of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoists).

The gunfight erupted in the Abhujmaad forest, bordering Maharashtra, during a search operation following intelligence on senior cadres in the area, according to Narayanpur Superintendent of Police Robinson Guria. The exchange of fire continued for several hours resulting in the recovery of their bodies along with significant armaments, including an AK-47, an INSAS rifle, a barrel grenade launcher, explosives, and Maoist literature.

The two men, active in the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee for over three decades, were implicated in numerous violent incidents in Bastar that led to the deaths of both security personnel and civilians.

Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P stated that the operations against the Maoists have dealt a significant blow to the outfit. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- The gunfight erupted in the Abhujmaad forest, bordering Maharashtra.

Forced to pay ₹10K bar bill: Hyderabad teen dies by suicide

HYDERABAD, 22 SEPT

A 19-year-old engineering student allegedly died by suicide here after being "harassed" following a financial dispute, police said on Monday. The victim, a native of Adilabad district, allegedly hung himself in a room of a private hostel at Narapally on Sunday night, they said adding it was not a ragging case. A group of friends went to a party at a bar, where an argument over splitting the bill led to an altercation, according to preliminary investigation. The student was also allegedly assaulted by some local youths.

In a purported video, recorded before ending his life, the student said some people demanded money and threatened him and that he was insulted and beaten up by them. He said they took him to a bar and was forced to consume alcohol and foot the bill of Rs 10,000. Based on a complaint by the student's father, a case of abetment of suicide, extortion was registered. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

Heavy rain likely in Odisha due to low-pressure

BHUBANESWAR, 22 SEPT

A low-pressure area has formed over the Bay of Bengal, potentially bringing heavy rainfall to Odisha. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced that this weather system, influenced by an upper air cyclonic circulation, might cause heavy rain until 27 September. Squally weather is anticipated along the Odisha coast, with wind speeds reaching 40-50kmph and gusts up to 60kmph from 21-25 September. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is predicted for Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts, prompting the IMD to issue an 'orange' warning, advising preparedness for action. The forecasters indicated potential widespread rainfall throughout Odisha on 22 September. *—PTI*

Tribals protest death of babies due to rat bites

INDORE, 22 SEPT

A tribal organisation has staged an indefinite sit-in at Maharaja Yeshwantrao Hospital (MYH) in Indore following the tragic deaths of two newborn girls allegedly bitten by rats. Members of Jai Adivasi Yuva Shakti are pressing for the suspension of senior officials, including the college dean Dr Arvind Ghanghoria and MYH Superintendent Dr Ashok Yadav, demanding a culpable homicide case against them. "Until action is taken, the families will not receive justice," stated Lokesh Mujalda, the organisation's national president. Hospital authorities claim the infants died from severe health complications, not rat bites. Disciplinary action has already been taken against eight staff members, with Dr Yadav reportedly on leave for health issues. *—PTI*

Plea in SC flags AI crash report bias

The plea says report withheld important info from the data recorder

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The plea in the Supreme Court, filed by an aviation safety NGO led by Captain Amit Singh, alleged that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)probe into the Air India crash which killed 265 people violates citizens' fundamental rights to life, equality and access to truthful information.

The plea, filed by NGO 'Safety Matters Foundation', said the AAIB issued its preliminary report on 12 July, attributing the accident to "fuel cutoff switches" being moved from "run" to "cutoff", effectively suggesting a pilot error.

It alleged that the report withheld critical information, including the full Digital Flight Data Recorder output, complete Cockpit Voice Recorder transcripts with time stamps and Electronic Aircraft Fault Recording data.

The PIL further criticises the report for downplaying systemic anomalies, such as fuel-switch defects, electrical faults, Ram Air Turbine deployment and electrical disturbances, and for prematurely attributing the crash to a pilot error.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, argued in the apex court that one line of the preliminary report which blamed the pilots for the crash help build inaccurate media narratives.

"It's been over 100 days since the crash and we still don't know the reason," Bhushan said. "Media reporting from one isolated line from the preliminary report has actually distorted the larger picture," he submitted and added the probe panel could be headed by a judicial person.

He alleged in the probe panel constituted after the crash, three of the five-members were from the aviation regulator and there could be an issue of conflict of interest. "There are three interested parties–manufacturer of aircraft, airline and the DGCA and involvement of any member of these three parties will be a conflict of interest. How can officers of the very organisation whose role is likely to be examined be part of the committee probing the incident," Bhushan said. When bench felt an independent inquiry by domain experts was a better option, Bhushan said a retired judge could head the panel to oversee the inquiry. *—PTI*

SC NOTICE TO DELHI POLICE ON BAIL PLEAS OF UMAR, IMAM

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam *PHOTO: ANI*

The Supreme Court on Monday sought Delhi Police's response on the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima and Meeran Haider in the UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 riots in Delhi.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria issued the notice and posted the matter for 7 October.

The activists have challenged the Delhi High Court order of 2 September which denied bail to nine people, including Khalid and Imam, saying "conspiratorial" violence under the garb of demonstrations or protests by citizens could not be allowed.

Besides Khalid and Imam, those who faced bail rejection are Fatima, Haider, Mohd Saleem Khan, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, Abdul Khalid Saifi and Shadab Ahmed. The bail plea of another accused, Tasleem Ahmed, was rejected by a different high court bench on 2 September.

Khalid, Imam and the rest of the accused persons were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured. *—PTI*

Rly steps in as NH closure hits J&K apple growers

SRINAGAR, 22 SEPT

The Northern Railways on Monday supplied 21 container-based wagons to ferry apples from Kashmir, marking another initiative to support the apple industry, officials said. More than 6,400 tons of apples have been transported from Kashmir to Delhi in the last week, using both bogie covered wagons and parcel coaches from the Anantnag Goods Shed Terminal in the Kashmir Valley.

Apple prices had plunged by nearly 40 percent after the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway remained shut for almost three weeks from late August to mid-September, choking supplies from Kashmir and inflicting heavy losses on growers.

The highway blockade, coming at the peak of the apple season, has left Kashmir's horticulture sector paralysed. Kashmir's economy suffered a huge blow due to extreme weather. *—PTI*

NAVRATRI SEASON IS HERE

Women ring a bell, as they offers prayers on the first day of Navratri at Baradevi Mandir in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

SC awaits report on Kerala Guv vs CM

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday said the report of former apex court judge Sudhanshu Dhulia was to be tabled before hearing the plea of Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar seeking the removal of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan from a panel tasked to recommend vice chancellors (VCs) for two state universities.

The plea was mentioned by Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Governor, before a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and K V Viswanathan.

The top law officer indicated urgency and asked the bench to take up the Governor's plea for hearing. Venkataramani said the question of who was the authority to appoint vice chancellors could create complications once the committee's recommendations were submitted. "I have a very small request. These applications should not be seen as obstructing any process of Justice Dhulia in this matter. But a subsequent order passed by another bench has restored the Chancellor as the appointing authority," he said.

The attorney general was referring to an order of Justice Surya Kant-led bench in the West Bengal Governor–VCs dispute, where the court appointed former CJI U U Lalit to mediate.

According to the attorney general, this modification effectively restores the role of Governor as Chancellor in the appointment process, raising questions about the Kerala panel's functioning. "Should we not wait for the report of Justice Dhulia?" Justice Pardiwala asked, indicating that the court would take a holistic view only after receiving the committee's findings.

The bench continued, "Let the report come. We will work out the modalities. We will balance... the day it comes, we will look into the report and the modified order."

The bench then deferred the matter. *—PTI*

NO SC RELIEF TO JACQUELINE

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT:

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to interfere with a Delhi High Court order dismissing actor Jacqueline Fernandez's plea to quash ECIR (equivalent to FIR) in a Rs 200 crore money laundering case involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar.

"We will not interfere at this stage," a bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who represented Fernandez.

The plea filed through advocate Sumeer Sodhi, Fernandez has challenged the high court's 3 July order which dismissed her petition seeking quashing of the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) in the money laundering case. Fernandez is an accused in the money laundering case lodged against Chandrasekhar and had appeared before the Enforcement Directorate for questioning in the investigation. *—PTI*

Kolkata law college rape: DNA of accused matches with evidence

KOLKATA, 22 SEPT

The Kolkata Police has claimed that the DNA reports corroborated the role of key accused Monojit 'Mango' Mishra in the alleged rape of a student inside South Calcutta Law College.

Sources said that the DNA test results of samples found on the clothes of the 24-year-old survivor matched those of the accused. Blood samples were taken from both the survivor and the accused to conduct the DNA test. The chargesheet was submitted to the Court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Alipore, naming Mishra, the prime accused and an alumnus of the college, along with three others.

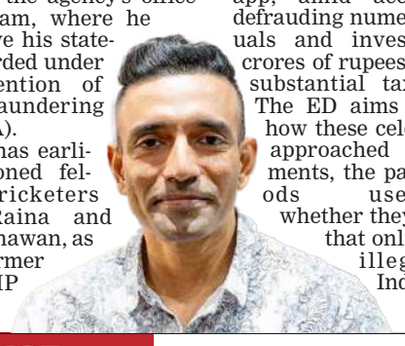
Police have also claimed in the chargesheet that the CCTV camera footage collected from the college premises and that from two nearby shops outside also corroborated the crime. "The footage also showed that the crime spot was inside the guard's room. The role of the other two accused, Pramit Mukherjee and Zaib Ahmed, who stood outside the room, and also that of the security guard, could be seen," the officer said.

He added that investigators were awaiting reports of voice sample examinations collected from the accused persons' mobile phones.

"Once the results are delivered, a supplementary chargesheet will be filed in court," he said. *—PTI*

Uthappa appears before ED in betting app case

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT



Former Indian cricketer Robin Uthappa, aged 39, appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the online betting platform 1xBet. Uthappa arrived at the agency's office around 11am, where he was to have his statement recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED has earlier questioned fellow cricketers Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan, as well as former TMC MP and actor Mimi Chakraborty and Bengali actor Ankush Hazra in connection with this investigation. Yuvraj Singh and actor Sonu Sood are scheduled to appear before the agency on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively.

The probe focuses on the operations of the 1xBet betting app, amid accusations of defrauding numerous individuals and investors out of crores of rupees and evading substantial tax payments. The ED aims to ascertain how these celebrities were approached for endorsements, the payment methods used, and whether they were aware that online betting is illegal in India. *—PTI*

Centre extends ban on NSCN-K for 5 more yrs

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The government has extended the ban on the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K) and all its factions, wings, and front organisations for another five years, citing activities that threaten India's sovereignty and integrity.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a notification stating that the ban will take effect from 28 September under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The NSCN-K has long aimed to establish a sovereign Nagaland by seceding from India and incorporating Naga-inhabited areas from the Indo-Myanmar region. It has also reportedly allied with other banned outfits such as ULFA(I), PREPAK, and PLA.

The group is accused of engaging in extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and illegally possessing arms and ammunition. It has allegedly sought support from anti-India forces abroad for arms procurement.

Founded by the late S.S. Khaplang, a Myanmarese Naga who died in 2017, the outfit is now led by two of his deputies. The NSCN-K has remained a proscribed organisation for decades.

In contrast, its rival faction, the NSCN-IM, is currently involved in peace talks with the Indian government to resolve the long-standing insurgency in Nagaland. *—PTI*

Kerala man kills wife, broadcasts it on Facebook

KOLLAM, 22 SEPT

In a shocking incident, a 39-year-old woman was allegedly hacked to death by her husband, Isaac, 42, who then broadcast the murder live on Facebook. The tragic event occurred at around 6.30am at Koothanadi near Punalur on Monday. The victim, identified as Shalini, resided in Placheri, Valakkodu.

According to the FIR, the couple had been experiencing marital difficulties. The report states, "When Shalini went near the pipeline behind the kitchen to take a bath, the accused attacked her with a knife, inflicting deep injuries on her neck, chest, and back."

Following the attack, Isaac went live on Facebook, admitting to the murder while voicing accusations against Shalini. In the two-minute video, he claimed that she had failed to obey him, moved in with her mother, and allegedly misappropriated jewellery. Isaac asserted, "Shalini demanded to leave the residence after recently returning home," and expressed bitterness towards her employment and participation in political meetings.

After the live stream, Isaac surrendered at the Punalur police station. Police arrived at the scene shortly thereafter and discovered Shalini's deceased body, which was subsequently moved to the hospital.

The couple had two sons; Isaac, a Gulf returnee, worked as a rubber tapper, while Shalini was employed as a helper at a local school. *—PTI*

TO PREVENT MISUSE

Zubeen Garg's voice to be digitally preserved

GUWAHATI, 22 SEPT

Singer-composer Manas Robin, a close associate of Zubeen Garg, said the move aims to safeguard the artist's legacy *PHOTO: INSTAGRAM*

As Assam mourns the untimely death of music icon Zubeen Garg, efforts are underway to digitally preserve his voice to prevent unauthorised use and tampering in the future.

Singer-composer Manas Robin, a close associate of Garg, said the move aims to safeguard the artist's legacy in an era of rapidly advancing AI technology. "With AI-generated software, Zubeen's voice could easily be misused by others. We are creating a digital signature to trace the origin of his vocals and prevent distortion or fake replication," Robin told PTI at Sarusajai stadium, where thousands gathered to pay tribute.

Garg, 52, died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on Friday. His mortal remains arrived in Guwahati on Sunday, with state honours scheduled for his final rites on Tuesday.

Robin explained that, like face detection in digital deepfakes, similar systems are being developed to trace the source of audio clips to their authentic origin. Garg's songs are already being archived through his YouTube channel and other platforms.

- Garg, 52, died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on Friday. His mortal remains arrived in Guwahati on Sunday.

"This digital signature will ensure Zubeen's voice can't be misused or passed off as someone else's," Robin added, noting a global resurgence in interest in Garg's music following his death.

"His high-octave singing came naturally — unmatched and irreplaceable," he said. *—PTI*

FASHIONABLE DESTRUCTION

Outdoor clothing brand Arc'teryx was forced to apologise for a 19 Sept 'dragon fireworks' display during an event in an ecologically sensitive region of Tibet's Himalayan belt. The Canadian firm saud the display was 'out of line with Arc'teryx's values'. Critics said the mountains were too fragile for fireworks, and the explosions, colour and smoke would have disrupted the ecosystem and local wildlife. Chinese officials are reportedly investigating the brand ***PHOTO: XIAOHONGSHU***

Rehabilitation – India's 'missing link' in healthcare

India is failing its patients by treating hospital discharge as the end of the treatment, as they are thrown into an unstructured ecosystem of untrained caregivers and fragmented follow-ups, which leads to delayed recovery and frequent readmissions, experts said here, flagging the issue of "rehabilitation shortage".

They highlighted this urgent mismatch and underscored that rehabilitation is not a luxury but the missing bridge between survival and healing.

In reality, recovery begins only after discharge, experts said at the IAPMR Mid-Term CME 2025 event hosted by the Indraprastha Association of Rehabilitation Medicine (Delhi chapter of IAPMR) at the SCOPE Convention on 12 and 13 September.

With the theme "From first steps to golden years – advancing rehabilitation across life spans", the gathering included leading neurosurgeons, neurologists, physiatrists and healthcare innovators.

India's burden of stroke, trauma and critical illness is growing, yet the country has only 1,251 stroke rehabilitation centres for 1.46 billion people – roughly one for every 11.7 lakh individuals. Global benchmarks recommend one recovery bed for every acute hospital bed, but India is nowhere close to this target, the experts said.

The panel on "Accessibility of PMR Services in the Private Sector" revealed how the gap is particularly stark outside government institutions.

Insurance and corporate coverage for rehabilitation are grossly inadequate, leaving families to bear the financial and emotional burden of long-term recovery.

Experts underlined that collaboration between physiatrists and private hospitals is essential to mainstream rehabilitation care.

Dr Rahul Gupta, Senior Director and Head of Neurosurgery at Fortis Hospital Noida and Escorts, Okhla, Delhi, observed that the problem is not only one of infrastructure but also awareness.

"The greatest tragedy is ignorance. Families are rarely told that rehabilitation exists as a structured speciality that can transform recovery after stroke, spine surgery, or trauma.

"Even within the medical community, PMR is often overlooked. Until awareness spreads among doctors and patients, thousands of Indians will remain disabled when they could otherwise return to normal lives," he said.

The importance of timing was emphasised by Dr Gaurav Thukral, Co-Founder and President of HCAH India.

"The first 90 days after a stroke or major surgery decide the future of recovery. This is the window where strength, mobility, speech, and memory can be restored. At HCAH, we have built hospitals where recovery is the sole focus.

"Robotic gait labs, AI-powered therapy dashboards, and protocol-driven care are not extras but essentials. In the last year alone we have touched more than 9 lakh lives, and we are showing that recovery care is not theoretical, it is measurable, practical, and life-changing," he noted.

Dr Tariq Matin, Director and Chief of Neurointerventional Surgery at Artemis Hospital, Gurugram, warned that the crisis is being compounded by policy choices.

"India's rehabilitation shortage is alarming but equally serious is the lack of knowledge among doctors themselves. Rehabilitation was recently dropped from the undergraduate medical curriculum by the NMC.

"This is a dangerous decision that will produce generations of doctors who do not prescribe or prioritise recovery. We appeal strongly for PMR (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation) to be reinstated in medical education.

"Without it, India's healthcare system will remain incomplete no matter how advanced our hospitals become," he stressed.

The discussion also stressed the absence of structured post-stroke rehabilitation guidelines in India, even though stroke is one of the leading causes of disability.

Experts called for national protocols that make rehabilitation mandatory and ensure it is initiated early, ensuring every patient is assessed and referred before leaving the hospital. Without such guidelines, thousands of stroke survivors are discharged without a clear path to recovery, losing valuable time in the golden window of rehabilitation.

Echoing the broader mission, Dr PC Muralidharan, President of IAPMR and Professor of PMR at Government Medical College, Kozhikode, said the CME was designed to move rehabilitation into the centre of India's health agenda.

"Rehabilitation is not an add-on to healthcare. It is a right and a necessity across the lifespan from managing childhood disabilities to supporting the elderly, from rebuilding lives after trauma to helping survivors of ICU syndromes.

"This CME is a platform to strengthen knowledge, create awareness, and remind policymakers and practitioners that without rehabilitation, medicine is incomplete," he said. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

'Countries to up fossil fuel output despite climate crisis'

Countries are planning to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than what would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a new report warned on Monday.

The Production Gap Report 2025 said governments' production plans for coal, oil and gas are 120 per cent above levels aligned with the 1.5 degree Celsius pathway and 77 per cent higher than those consistent with a 2 degree rise.

The Paris Agreement, under which countries committed to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees and hold it to well below 2 degrees, completes 10 years in 2025.

At COP28 in Dubai, governments agreed to a call for "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems".

Instead of winding down fossil fuels, governments are now collectively planning even higher levels of coal production until 2035, gas production until 2050 and a continued rise in oil output to mid-century, the report by Stockholm Environment Institute, the International Institute for Sustainable Development and Climate Analytics showed.

"This collective failure means fossil fuel production will need to fall even more steeply in the coming decades to compensate for lost time," the report said.

The analysis, covering 20 major producers including India, the US, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Australia, showed that 17 of them still plan to increase output of at least one fossil fuel by 2030. Eleven expect higher production of coal, oil or gas than they did just two years ago.

The report estimated that by 2030, coal production will be 500 per cent higher than levels consistent with a 1.5 degree pathway, oil 31 per cent higher and gas 92 per cent higher.

This comes despite scientific consensus that coal use must be nearly phased out by 2040 and oil and gas production cut by three-quarters by 2050 to keep global goals within reach.

The warning echoes findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has said global greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 and fall by 43 per cent by 2030 to avoid worsening of climate change.

India, with a 2070 net-zero target, is planning higher coal production in the near term.

A study in Nature, a leading multidisciplinary science journal, earlier this year estimated that 60 per cent of global oil and gas reserves and 90 per cent of coal must remain unextracted to stay within 1.5 degrees.

The Production Gap Report said fossil fuel lock-in is worsening because of massive investments in new infrastructure, making future cuts harder and more expensive.

The fiscal cost of subsidies also remains near record highs, with governments continuing to support production through tax incentives, public investments and opening up new exploration blocks.

"While countries at last year's COP28 summit in Dubai agreed to keep 1.5 degrees within reach", the report noted that most governments have failed to match that pledge with concrete production cuts.

The International Court of Justice recently reaffirmed that 1.5 degrees is the primary temperature goal of the Paris Agreement, adding legal weight to calls for urgent reductions.

The report did highlight some positive steps. Germany has advanced its coal phase-out timeline, Brazil has launched an energy transition acceleration programme, and China reached its 2030 renewable energy target six years early. Colombia has adopted a Just Energy Transition roadmap.

But the report warned these efforts are overshadowed by the expansion plans of the world's biggest producers.

The United States, after revoking federal net-zero orders this year, is now projected to significantly raise output of oil, gas and coal.

India, with a 2070 net-zero target, is planning higher coal production in the near term. Russia, Saudi Arabia and China are also among those expected to expand production.

As governments prepare to submit their next round of climate pledges under the Paris Agreement this year, the report called on them to explicitly integrate plans to reduce fossil fuel production into their national strategies and to strengthen global cooperation for a just transition. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

PM Netanyahu is on a mission to create 'Greater Israel'

Much of the world is focused on a two-state solution in resolving the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears devoted to realising his vision of a "Greater Israel" instead.

Netanyahu appears to be halfway through achieving this goal, despite all the international condemnation of his war in Gaza and the increasing isolation of Israel.

The two-state solution now seems to be no more than a catchword for governments around the world that want to show their solidarity with the Palestinian cause at a time when Israel is hard at work to ensure the concept becomes totally defunct.

The prospects for creating an independent Palestinian state out of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip to live side-by-side with Israel in peace and security have never been dimmer.

In the wake of Israel's attack on Hamas leaders in Qatar earlier this month, an emergency Arab-Muslim summit was convened by Qatar to provide a collective response.

The meeting proved to be very ineffective. The leaders issued a strong condemnation of the strike on Qatar, but no plan for how to prevent Israel from attacking its neighbours or halt what a United Nations commission has now called a genocide in Gaza.

Instead, the leaders offered a tepid statement, saying they would take all possible legal and effective measures to prevent Israel from continuing its actions against the Palestinian people.

Middle East leaders know the only power that can rein in Israel is its committed strategic partner, the United States.

Washington does not appear prepared to do that. While President Donald Trump has assured the region Israel will not repeat its attack on Qatar, his secretary of state, Marco Rubio, urgently flew to Israel to reconfirm America's unshakeable alliance with the Jewish state.

In praying together with Netanyahu at the Western Wall with a kippah on his head, Rubio demonstrated the Trump administration would stand by the prime minister all the way.

And Netanyahu was quick to declare that Israel reserves the right to hit the "Hamas terrorists" anywhere. He has demanded Qatar expel Hamas officials or face Israel's wrath again.

Based on the language used by the Israeli leader and his extremist ministers, the creation of "Greater Israel" appears to be a priority.

At every point, Benjamin Netanyahu is quick to declare that Israel reserves the right to hit the 'Hamas terrorists' anywhere ***PHOTO: PTI***

In recent weeks, Netanyahu has publicly alluded to this, saying he was "very" connected to the idea.

The "Greater Israel" phrase was used after the Six-Day War in 1967 to refer to the lands Israel had conquered: the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai peninsula (which has since been returned to Egypt).

This concept was enshrined in 1977 in the founding charter of Netanyahu's Likud Party, which said "between the [Mediterranean] Sea and the Jordan [River] there will only be Israeli sovereignty".

Last year, Netanyahu affirmed that Israel must have "security control over the entire territory west of the Jordan River". He added, "That collides with the idea of [Palestinian] sovereignty. What can we do?"

Netanyahu is now firmly in a position to annex the Gaza Strip, followed by formally extending Israeli jurisdiction over all the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, where more than 700,000 settlers live under the protection of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), and potentially annex the entire area.

- Arab and Muslim leaders have strongly condemned Netanyahu's references to a "Greater Israel". The US also has not publicly endorsed it.

In addition, Israel has made extraterritorial gains in both Lebanon and Syria after degrading Hezbollah and striking both southern Syria and Iran. He has said the IDF's footprint in both countries will not be pulled back any time soon.

Arab and Muslim leaders have strongly condemned Netanyahu's references to a "Greater Israel". The US also has not publicly endorsed it, though the US ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, has been a supporter of the idea.

WHAT CAN THE WORLD DO?

Netanyahu and his colleagues have weathered the international criticism over their catastrophic Gaza operations for nearly two years, with unwavering US security, economic and financial backing.

Equally, Netanyahu's critics say he has shown little concern about the safety and freedom of the remaining Israeli hostages still in Hamas's custody. He has brushed off the desires of a majority of Israelis for a ceasefire and release of the hostages.

For Netanyahu and his ruling clique, the end justifies the means. Given this, the expected recognition of the state of Palestine by many Western countries at the UN General Assembly this week will have little or no bearing on Israel or, for that matter, the US. They have both already rejected it as a meaningless and unworthy symbolic exercise.

This begs the question of what needs to be done to divert Israel from its path. The only means that could possibly work would be sanctioning Netanyahu and his government and severing all military, economic and trade ties with Israel.

Anything short of this will allow the Israeli leadership to continue its pursuit of a "Greater Israel", if this is indeed their ultimate plan.

This would come at a terrible cost not only for the Palestinians and the region, but also for Israel's global reputation. When Netanyahu eventually leaves office, he will leave behind a state in international disrepute. And it may not recover from this for a very long time. *—PTI*

Trump government takes out rally for Kirk

Kirk's widow Erika says she forgives the killer; Trump calls Charlie a martyr

GLENDALE, 22 SEPT

US President Donald Trump praised Charlie Kirk as a "great American hero" and "martyr" for freedom as he and other prominent conservatives gathered Sunday evening to honour the slain Conservative political activist.

The memorial service for Kirk, whom Trump credits with playing a pivotal role in his 2024 election victory, drew tens of thousands of mourners, including Vice President JD Vance, other senior administration officials and young conservatives shaped by the 31-year-old firebrand.

"He's a martyr now for America's freedom," Trump said in his tribute. "I know I speak for everyone here today when I say that none of us will ever forget Charlie. And neither now will history."

Speakers highlighted Kirk's profound faith and his strong belief that young conservatives need to get married, build families and pass on their values to keep building their movement. They also repeatedly told conservative activists, sometimes in confrontational tones, that the best way to honour Kirk was doubling down on his mission to move American politics further to the right.

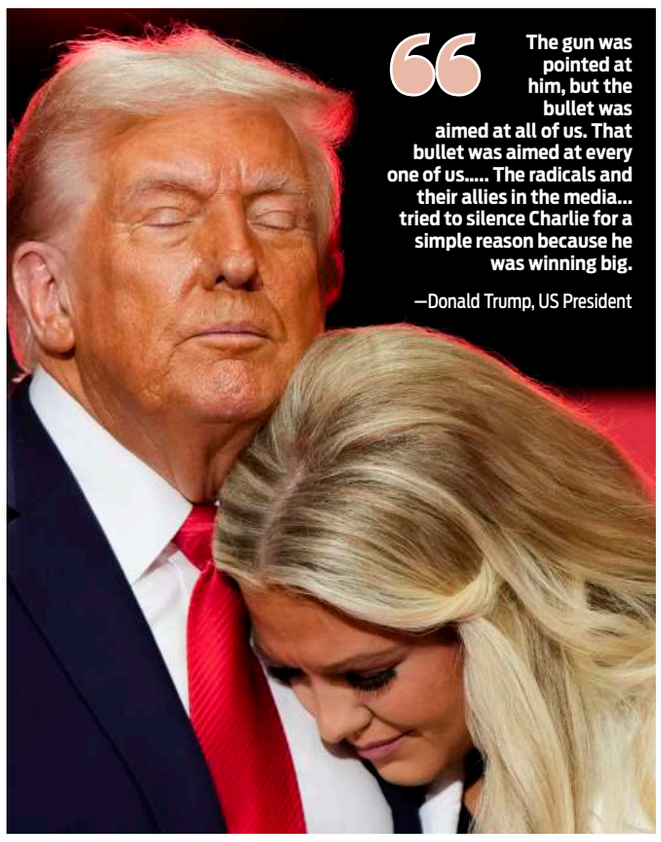
"For Charlie, we will remember that it is better to stand on our feet defending the United States of America and defending the truth than it is to die on our knees," Vance said. "My friends, for Charlie, we must remember that he is a hero to the United States of America. And he is a martyr for the Christian faith."

Kirk's assassination at a 10 Sept appearance on a Utah college campus has become a singular moment for the modern-day conservative movement.

Kirk's widow, Erika, in her own address said in the midst of her grief she was finding comfort that her husband left this world without regrets.

"My husband, Charlie, he wanted to save young men, just like the one who took his life," said Erika Kirk, who is taking over as Turning Point's leader. She added, "I forgive him (the shooter)."

Other notable speakers and attendees included Donald Trump Jr, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. —*PTI*


"The gun was pointed at him, but the bullet was aimed at all of us. That bullet was aimed at every one of us..... The radicals and their allies in the media... tried to silence Charlie for a simple reason because he was winning big.
—Donald Trump, US President

President Donald Trump hugs Erika Kirk at the conclusion of a memorial for her husband, Conservative activist Charlie Kirk on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump and Musk reunite at Kirk's rally

US President Donald Trump and Tesla CEO Elon Musk were spotted sitting side by side at the memorial service for Charlie Kirk, for the first time since their dramatic split in May when the Tesla CEO let his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Musk shared a post on X with Trump writing, "For Charlie." When asked about the meeting, Trump said that he was a "great guy," before going off on a tangent.

WH scribes to write what is authorised

The Trump administration said journalists at the Pentagon must pledge they won't gather any information - even unclassified - that hasn't been expressly authorised for release, and will revoke the press credentials of those who do not obey.

US: Paracetamol causes autism

Trump's administration is on Monday expected to tie pregnant women's use of the popular medicine Tylenol (or paracetamol) to a risk of autism, contrary to medical guidelines. During the memorial, Trump said, "I think we found an answer to autism."

Putin: Will stick to nuke treaty for one more year

MOSCOW, 22 SEPT

Russia's President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that Moscow will adhere to nuclear arms limits for one more year after a nuclear pact with the United States expires in February. The New START treaty is the last remaining arms control agreement between Russia and the US. Speaking at a meeting with members of Russia's Security Council, Putin said that the pact's termination would have negative consequences for global stability. Putin said that Russia would expect the US to follow Moscow's example and also stick to the treaty's limits. —*PTI*

Nepal PM Sushika Karki adds four new ministers

KATHMANDU, 22 SEPT

Nepal's newly-appointed Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Monday inducted four new ministers into her interim cabinet, raising its strength to eight. President Ramchandra Paudel administered the oath of office to former Justice Anil Kumar Sinha, National Innovation Centre founder Mahabir Pun, journalist Jagdish Kharel and expert Madan Pariyar at a ceremony held at the presidential office, Sheetal Niwas. The strength of the Karki-led Council of Ministers has reached eight. Sinha is the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, while Kharel is the Minister for Communication and Information Technology. Pariyar is the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development, while Pun is the Minister for Education and Science and Technology. —*ANI*

Sri Lanka bans rearing of invasive fish

COLOMBO, 22 SEPT

Sri Lanka's Fisheries Ministry announced that the government will soon ban the rearing of invasive fish species to protect fragile freshwater ecosystems. The regulations, to be gazetted shortly, will prohibit the possession, transport, breeding and sale of species such as Piranha, Knife Fish, Alligator Gar and Redline/Giant Snakehead. A three-month grace period will allow individuals to seek permits from the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency. Fisheries Secretary Kolitha Kamal Jinadasa said invasive species breed rapidly, destroy local fishing resources. Snakeheads, in particular, have multiplied in reservoirs and damage nets with their teeth. —*PTI*

Tom gets injured on 'Spider-man' set

LONDON, 22 SEPT

Filming of 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' has been halted after Tom Holland suffered an injury on set. Holland, 29, who plays the titular role, reportedly sustained a concussion during a stunt mishap and was rushed to the hospital for treatment, entertainment outlet The Sun reported.

The film, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, is slated for release on 31 July, 2026. It stars Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Sadie Sink, and Liza Colon- Zayas. Holland began shooting last month. —*PTI*

There will be no Palestine state: Bibi

A Palestinian woman washes clothes near a tent set up in a cemetery in Khan Younis after being displaced from northern Gaza Strip **PHOTO: PTI**

TEL AVIV/ BEIRUT, 22 SEPT

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly opposed the UK, Canada, and Australia's move to recognise Palestine and vowed to give a response to countries after his US visit.

"There will be no Palestinian state. The response to the latest attempt to force upon us a terror state in the heart of our land will be given after my return from the United States," Netanyahu said, according to an official statement.

"I have a clear message to those leaders who are recognizing a Palestinian state after the horrendous 7 Oct massacre: You are rewarding terror with an enormous prize. And I have another message for you: It's not going to happen. There will be no Palestinian state to the west of the Jordan River. For years I have prevented the creation of that terror state, against tremendous pressure, both domestic and from abroad," he said.

Meanwhile, Israel issued an evacuation notice to several hospitals in Gaza City as it continued its offensive and forced out the Palestinian population.

18 people were killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza on Monday

ISRAEL KILLS 5 IN LEBANON

At least five people, including three children, were killed in an Israeli drone strike in the southern Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, Lebanon's Health Ministry reported, as Israel continues operations in its neighbour despite a US-brokered truce that began in November.

Lebanon's Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, stated that the three children and their father were US citizens. —*Agencies*

UK mulls visa fee waiver after H1B hike

LONDON, 22 SEPT

The UK government is looking at bolstering a drive to attract global talent with a possible visa fee waiver to support the world's top science and tech talent relocation to the country, a media report said on Monday.

The Global Talent Taskforce, backed up by a 54-million-pound Global Talent Fund launched earlier this year, is revving up further to lure international experts, including Indians, even as the US announced a clampdown on its H1B visas.

The taskforce, which reports directly to Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chancellor Rachel Reeves, works across 10 Downing Street and the UK Treasury to explore ways to boost the UK's economic growth.

"We're kicking around the idea of cutting (visa) costs to zero," a government official said. "We're talking about the sort of people who have attended the world's top five universities or have won prestigious prizes."

It comes as President Donald Trump's order imposing a $100,000 one-off application fee on all new H1B visa applications came into force on Sunday.

CHINA SILENT ON H1B

China declined to comment on the H1B visa fee hike, but at the same time invited global professionals to work in the country as it prepares to roll out a new employment visa next month. —*PTI*

A source said that the government was mulling cutting the visa fee to zero **PHOTO: X**

Dozens arrested, injured in protests near Philippine palace

MANILA, 22 SEPT

Philippine police arrested 49 individuals suspected of attacking officers with rocks, bottles, and firebombs while blocking key roads leading to the presidential palace during a peaceful anti-corruption rally. The unrest occurred on Sunday as over 33,000 demonstrators gathered in a historic park and a democracy monument in Manila, expressing outrage over a corruption scandal involving lawmakers and construction firms profiting from flood-control projects.

The police reported that about 100 people participated in the violence, injuring around 70 law enforcement officers. President Marcos Jr acknowledged the scandal in his July speech, establishing an independent commission to investigate the irregularities in the 9,855 flood-control projects valued at over 545 billion pesos (£9.3 billion). —*PTI*

Demonstrators chant slogans during an anti-corruption rally at Manila, Philippines on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Super typhoon forces evacuations in Philippines, Taiwan

MANILA, 22 SEPT

Thousands of people were evacuated from northern Philippine villages, and schools and offices were closed on Monday in the archipelago and neighbouring Taiwan as one of the strongest typhoons this year threatened to cause flooding and landslides on its way to southeastern China.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. suspended government work and classes at all levels on Monday in the capital and 29 provinces in the main northern Luzon region.

More than 8,200 people evacuated to safety in Cagayan while 1,220 fled to emergency shelters in Apayao, which is prone to flash floods and landslides. —*PTI*

AMID WARS AND GENOCIDE

World leaders convene for UNGA meet

UNITED NATIONS, 22 SEPT

World leaders are convening at the United Nations today during what is being termed as the international body's 'most volatile moments' in its 80-year history.

The challenges faced by the leaders include the genocide in Gaza, the unyielding war in Ukraine, escalating changes in the US approach to the world, hungry people everywhere and technologies that are advancing faster than the understanding of how to manage them.

The United Nations itself, which emerged from World War II's rubble on the premise that nations would work together to tackle political, social and financial issues, is in crisis itself. As Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said last week: "International cooperation is straining under pressures unseen in our lifetimes."

Yet the annual high-level gathering at the UN General Assembly will bring presidents, prime ministers and monarchs from about 150 of the 193 UN member nations to UN headquarters.

"We are gathering in turbulent — even uncharted — waters," Guterres said. He pointed to, among other spectres, "our planet overheating, new technologies racing ahead without guardrails, inequalities widening by the hour."

Guterres said he will use the more than 150 one-on-one meetings he has with leaders and ministers to urge that they speak to each other, bridge divides, reduce risks and find solutions — to conflicts, to keep the planet from increased warming, to put guardrails on fast-expanding artificial intelligence, and to find funding for lagging UN goals for 2030 including ending poverty in all countries and ensuring quality education for every child.

He said leaders must make progress, not merely engage in "posturing and promises".

However, UN watchers said that in a deeply polarised world, with no prospects of ceasefires in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan, whether the high-level meeting makes any progress remains a big question mark. Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador to the UN, has also stressed that "Palestine is going to be the huge elephant in this session of the General Assembly".

It will be front and centre on Monday at a high-level meeting co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia on implementing a two-state solution to the nearly eight-decade Israeli-Palestinian conflict. —*PTI*

A child's toy lies in the rubble in rural Damascus, Syria **PHOTO: UN**

Syrian Prez goes to UN 1st time in 60 yrs

Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa arrived in New York on Sunday to take part in the UN General Assembly, the first president of Syria to do so in nearly six decades. The last time a Syrian head of state attended the General Assembly was in 1967. That was before the 50-year rule of the Assad family dynasty, which came to an end in December when then-President Bashar Assad was ousted in a lightning insurgent offensive led by al-Sharaa.

A 13-hour Optus outage stopped hundreds of emergency calls during a network upgrade — linked to the deaths of at least three people **PHOTO: X**

Emergency call failure linked to 4 deaths in Aus

MELBOURNE, 22 SEPT

Australia on Monday foreshadowed changes to the country's telecommunications industry after a major company's failure to connect hundreds of emergency calls last week was linked to four deaths.

Optus, Australia's second-largest telecom company, blamed a "technical failure" for 624 calls failing to connect to emergency services. While Americans call "9-1-1" in an emergency, Australians call "0-0-0." Someone died in four of those Australian emergencies, reports said.

Communications Minister Anika Wells said on Monday the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the industry watchdog, was investigating what went wrong last week. "Optus and all telecommunications providers have obligations under Australian law to make sure emergency services calls go through," Wells told reporters.

Optus was fined more than 12 million Australian dollars for failing to meet emergency call rules during another network outage last November.

Telstra, Australia's largest telecom company, was fined AUD 3 million (USD 2 million) in December last year for failing to comply with emergency call rules during a technical disruption at its "0-0-0" call centre. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rupee falls 15 paise, closes at 88.31 vs US dollar

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

The Indian rupee fell by 15 paise, closing at 88.31 against the US dollar on Monday amidst investor concerns over the impact of former President Trump's H1B visa fee hike on Indian remittances and heightened risk aversion. The currency opened at 88.20, reaching a low of 88.34 during trading. Anuj Choudhary from Mirae Asset ShareKhan noted, "We expect the rupee to remain weak as the US visa fee hike may dent market sentiment." Despite a decline in crude oil prices, which could provide some support, the economic outlook remains cautious. The dollar index fell slightly to 97.52, while Brent crude traded lower at USD 66.54 per barrel. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Goldman Sachs expands '10,000 Women' initiative

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Goldman Sachs has announced the expansion of its '10,000 Women' initiative in India, introducing the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) and the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow Enterprise Incubation Centre (IIM-LEIC) as new academic partners. The initiative aims to bolster economic growth by providing women entrepreneurs with education, mentoring, and access to capital. The programme aspires to graduate 1,000 women entrepreneurs over the next year and to increase its overall intake to 10,000 by 2033. "We are doubling our commitment to women entrepreneurs in India," stated Sonjoy Chatterjee, Chairman of Goldman Sachs India. *—PTI*

GOLD SURGES ₹ 2,200 TO HIT HIGH OF ₹ 1.16L

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Gold prices soared by Rs 2,200 to an all-time high of Rs 1,16,200 per 10 grams in Delhi on Monday, fuelled by strong global cues and expectations of a dovish stance from the US Federal Reserve.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,14,000 on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also hit a record high of Rs 1,15,650, up Rs 2,150.

Silver prices surged by Rs 4,380 to a record Rs 1,36,380 per kg, from Rs 1,32,000 on Friday.

"Expectations of two Fed rate cuts by year-end are weakening the dollar and Treasury yields, boosting bullion prices," said Saumil Gandhi of HDFC Securities. Strong inflows into ETFs and central bank buying have further supported the rally.

Since December 31, 2024, gold has gained Rs 37,250 or 47.18 per cent, while silver has zoomed Rs 46,680 or 52.04 per cent.

Globally, spot gold hit a record USD 3,728.43 per ounce. Investors await Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech and US PMI data for policy cues.

Spot silver rose 1.19 per cent to USD 43.61. Supply constraints and strong industrial demand from EVs and solar sectors are driving silver's surge, analysts said. *—PTI*

Mkts plummet as H1B fee shock hits IT stocks

Sensex closes at 82,159.97, while Nifty drops by 124 points

IT stocks led the decline, with Infobeans Technologies falling 8.08 per cent, Hexaware down 7.08 per cent, LTI Mindtree 4.54 per cent lower, and Persistent Systems off by 4.19 per cent **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended sharply lower on Monday, led by a steep sell-off in IT stocks following US President Donald Trump's move to raise the H1B visa fee to USD 1,00,000 for new applicants — a major blow to India's Rs 23.5 lakh crore IT outsourcing sector.

The BSE Sensex fell 466.26 points or 0.56 per cent to close at 82,159.97, while the NSE Nifty dropped 124.70 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 25,202.35. During intra-day trade, the Sensex had tanked 628.94 points.

IT stocks led the decline, with Infobeans Technologies falling 8.08 per cent, Hexaware down 7.08 per cent, LTI Mindtree 4.54 per cent lower, and Persistent Systems off by 4.19 per cent. Among blue chips, Tech Mahindra declined 3.20 per cent, TCS fell 3.02 per cent, Infosys dipped 2.61 per cent, Wipro lost 2.25 per cent, and HCL Tech ended 1.84 per cent down.

The BSE IT index plunged 2.73 per cent to 34,988.20, dragging the overall market.

"The move is expected to disrupt the Indian IT model, with over 70 per cent of H-1B visa holders being Indian tech professionals," said Hariprasad K, founder of Livelong Wealth.

Other laggards included Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, and L&T. However, Bajaj Finance, Adani Ports, UltraTech Cement and Eternal posted gains.

Vinod Nair of Geojit Investments noted, "Mid and smallcaps saw profit-booking. While visa concerns weighed on IT, GST cuts and improving macro factors could support markets ahead."

European markets were lower, while Asian peers traded mixed. Brent crude edged down 0.10 per cent to USD 66.61. FIIs bought equities worth Rs 390.74 crore on Friday. *—PTI*

Adani Group valuation jumps Rs 1.78 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Adani Group companies saw a surge of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in combined market valuation over two days following markets regulator Sebi's clean chit in the Hindenburg case. The regulator dismissed allegations of stock manipulation and related-party misuse, boosting confidence in Adani stocks.

Adani Power soared 19.99% to Rs 170.15, hitting its upper circuit, while Adani Total Gas rose 19.87% and Adani Green Energy jumped 11.75%.

Other group stocks, including Adani Enterprises, Ambuja Cements, and Adani Ports, also went up. The two-day rally follows Sebi's Thursday conclusion that Hindenburg's accusations lacked evidence, further fueling market enthusiasm. *—PTI*

Adani **PHOTO: PTI**

H1B clarification eases immediate worry: Nasscom

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Nasscom on Monday said the clarification by the United States that the H1B visa fee hike will not affect current visa holders and will apply as a one-time fee only to fresh petitions has helped address the immediate ambiguity surrounding eligibility and timelines. The clarification also alleviated concerns about business continuity and uncertainty for H1B holders who were outside the US.

Further, Indian and India-centric companies operating in the US have significantly reduced their dependencies on H-1B visas and are increasing local hiring, it said, adding that given this, "we anticipate only a marginal impact for the sector". "Moreover, with the fee being applicable from 2026 onward, it gives companies time to further step up skilling programs in the US and enhance local hiring," the apex industry body said.

The industry is spending over USD 1 billion on local upskilling and hiring in the US, and the number of local hires has increased tremendously. "The clarification makes clear that the measure will not affect current visa holders and will apply as a one-time fee only to fresh petitions. This has helped address the immediate ambiguity surrounding eligibility & timelines," it said.

Over the years, Indian and India-centric companies operating in the US have significantly reduced their dependencies on H-1B visas and steadily increased their local hiring.

According to available data, the number of H-1B visas issued to leading Indian and India-centric companies has decreased from 14,792 in 2015, to 10,162 in 2024. *—PTI*

'H1B COSTS MAY SPUR LOCAL HIRING'

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The magnitude of the new H1B visa application fee for fresh petitions, which works out to USD 500 million in case of 5,000 filings, may nudge IT companies to expand offshore delivery or increase local hiring, according to Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The USD 1,00,000 fee will start to impact from FY27 onwards, when new petitions are filed. The visa applications for FY26 are already locked in.

"If an IT company were to apply for 5,000 H-1Bs in FY27, the annual fee alone would amount to USD 500 m (5,000xUSD 100,000). Given the magnitude of this fee, it is likely that Indian IT companies will avoid new H-1B filings altogether, opting instead to expand offshore delivery or increase local hiring," it said. *—PTI*

Govt to sell minority stake in state-run firms: DIPAM

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT:

The Department of Disinvestment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) secretary Arunish Chawla today said that the government was planning to sell minority stakes in about half a dozen state-run companies.

Speaking at Network18 Reforms Reloaded 2025 event in New Delhi, Chawla said that the government also has plans to sell shares in five public sector banks, including UCO Bank and Bank of Maharashtra, as well as reduce its shareholding in the largest insurer in the country, Life Insurance Corporation of India to meet the market regulator's minimum public shareholding norms. However, he did not

confirm which companies will be considered for the stake sale.

The official added that there would be more Offers for Sale (OFS), few IPOs and more value creation opportunities for the small retail investor. "We started with a few stake sales at the beginning of the year, we held up a bit in days of nervousness, but as markets have stabilised, we will bring in value creation opportunities for small investors," he said. *—Agencies*

Despite GST rate cut, small shops await fresh stocks

T'PURAM, 22 SEPT

The benefits of the recent GST rate cuts have begun to reach consumers in Kerala, though the price reduction is not yet uniform across all outlets.

While small provision stores, on which a vast majority of people depend, continued to sell essential commodities at the old prices, supermarkets, malls and other shops with GST registration reportedly offered goods at reduced rates. Medical stores and electronics shops also provided items at the revised lower prices.

According to sources in Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithi, it would take one to two weeks for small traders in the state to implement the new GST reforms and sell items at reduced prices. The Samithi is an umbrella organisation of traders in Kerala.

Santhosh, who runs a small provision store in northern Kozhikode, said he could not immediately provide the price reduction as he had already

purchased and stocked goods at the old rate."If I sell the goods at the new rate from today, I will incur a loss. I will provide the reduced prices once the fresh stocks arrive," he said.

An employee of a 24x7 medical shop in the city said they started selling medicines at reduced tax rates from this morning. "Tax has been reduced for all medicines as per the new update. Under the revised GST, bills for all medicines are about five per cent lower," he said.

The Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Limited, popularly known as MILMA, announced that the prices of various dairy products, including ghee, butter, paneer and ice cream, would be reduced in line with the new GST rates. Authorities said the revised GST rate of 40 per cent for lottery is effective from Monday. *—PTI*

Jio Payments Bank launches 'Savings Pro' with 6.5% interest

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Jio Payments Bank, a subsidiary of Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL), has introduced 'Savings Pro', allowing account holders to earn up to 6.5 per cent interest on idle funds. JFSL stated that customers can upgrade to a Savings Pro account with just a few clicks.

Customers must set a threshold amount of their choice, starting at Rs 5,000, and any surplus exceeding this amount will automatically be invested in select low-risk overnight mutual funds. The facility enables daily investments of up to Rs 1,50,000, with redemptions conducted in line with Securities Exchange Board of India guidelines.

The service allows customers to instantly redeem up to 90 per cent of their investments, with Rs 50,000 available for instant redemption. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India's smartphone exports to US falling, says GTRI

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

India's smartphone exports to its largest market, the US, plummeted by 58 per cent, dropping from USD 2.29 billion in May to USD 964.8 million by August, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

This alarming trend is unexpected, especially given there are no tariffs on smartphones.

"This demands urgent investigation to uncover the real reasons that are driving the fall," urged GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava.

Smartphone exports accounted for USD 10.6 billion—44 per cent of India's total global exports—making the decline particularly significant. *—PTI*

PHONEPE'S REVENUE CLIMBS BY 40%

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Fintech major PhonePe has reported a narrowing of its consolidated losses to Rs 1,727.4 crore in FY25, down from Rs 1,996.1 crore in the preceding fiscal.

The company's revenue from operations rose 40.5 per cent from Rs 5,064 crore in FY24 to Rs 7,115 crore in FY25, according to data accessed from Tofler.

PhonePe, which plans to file its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) later this year, posted a tri-fold growth in its adjusted Profit After Tax (PAT) to Rs 630 crore in FY25, from Rs 197 crore in the previous fiscal year. *—PTI*

Centre denies Vedanta's request for oil block extension

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

In a setback for mining baron Anil Agarwal's group, the government has rejected Vedanta group firm's application for extension of contract for a key Cambay basin oil and gas block.

Vedanta Cairn Oil and Gas, a unit of Mumbai-listed Vedanta Ltd, was the operator of the Gujarat offshore block CB-OS/2 with a 40 per cent stake.

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), which holds 50 per cent interest in the block, in a stock exchange filing, said the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has, in a letter dated 19 September 19 told the partners that the application for extension of the production sharing contract (PSC) for CB-OS/2 has not been accepted.

ONGC, which has been asked to take over the operations in the interim period, did not state the reason for the move.

The CB-OS/2 block, which holds Lakshmi and Gauri fields and currently produces 3,400 barrels of oil per day and 3.4 lakh standard cubic metres of gas per day, was one of the three properties operated by Cairn India when Agarwal's group acquired the firm in 2011 for USD 8.67 billion.

The other assets of Cairn India were the Barmer oil fields in Rajasthan and the Ravva oil and gas fields in the Krishna Godavari basin off the Andhra coast. *—PTI*

OVER DIGITAL AD MONOPOLY

Google faces another antitrust trial in US

WASHINGTON, 22 SEPT

Google is back in court as the US Justice Department seeks to dismantle parts of its digital advertising empire, accusing the tech giant of maintaining an illegal monopoly that harms publishers and stifles competition.

The trial, beginning Monday in Alexandria, Virginia, follows an earlier ruling by US District Judge Leonie Brinkema that found Google's advertising technology violated antitrust laws. The current proceedings will determine the remedy, with the Justice Department pushing for a breakup of Google's ad tech business.

Filed in 2023, the case challenges Google's control over a complex ad network that fuels most of the $305 billion in revenue for parent company

Alphabet Inc.'s services division. If successful, the government could force Google to sell off parts of its ad tech stack — a move the company warns would disrupt the internet ecosystem.

Google argues it has already reformed its Ad Manager system, offering more options and transparency. It maintains that the digital ad market is evolving rapidly, especially with AI-driven innovations from competitors like Meta, making the proposed remedy outdated.

- This trial mirrors a recent case in which another judge ruled Google's search engine was an illegal monopoly.

This trial mirrors a recent case in which another judge ruled Google's search engine was an illegal monopoly, but stopped short of ordering a breakup. That ruling, seen as lenient, helped boost Alphabet's market valuation past $3 trillion.

Judge Brinkema has asked both sides to consider the implications of the earlier search case as she weighs her decision, expected no earlier than the end of this year. *—PTI*

Don't care: Farhan on gun backlash

SKY hails 'fire and ice' Gill-Abhishek combo, says they compliment each other

DUBAI, 22 SEPT

Pakistan opening batter Sahibzada Farhan said he doesn't "care about what people think" in regards to his gun celebration in the Asia Cup 2025 Super 4s match against India at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

Farhan hit a six off left-arm spinner Axar Patel in the 10th over, bringing up a half-century for himself. He then held his bat like a gun and fired shots in the air.

The celebration has been viewed as provocative on social media after the Pahalgam attack, where 26 people were gunned down by terrorists. The Indian team has also refused to shake hands with Pakistan, in solidarity with the victims of the terrorist attack.

Abhishek Sharma
PHOTO: PTI

Sahibzada Farhan celebrated his 50 against India by pretending to fire in the air
PHOTO: PTI

"That celebration was just a moment at that time. I do not do a lot of celebrations after scoring 50. But, it suddenly came to my mind that let's do a celebration today. I did that. I don't know how people will take it. I don't care about that," Farhan told reporters.

Meanwhile, Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav said the contrasting batting styles of inseparable buddies Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill makes them a riveting "fire-and-ice" combination in India's T20 cricket set-up.

- India and Pakistan's clashes this Asia Cup have been mired in controversy, largely due to the Pahalgam terror attack. The Indian team had refused to shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts

The two friends made easy of a tricky target of 172 against Pakistan with a powerful 105-run opening stand.

Abhishek went on to score a scintillating 74 off 39 balls, his first fifty in the tournament while Gill shrugged off disappointment of an underwhelming league stage with a facile 47 off 28 balls.

"It's like a fire-and-ice combination. They complement each other really well. And that's what I want to see. If someone is batting brilliantly, the other can take the backseat and rotate the strike. It was required today to have a very good start. And they did (provide that)," Suryakumar told press after India's six-wicket win in the Super 4 game here on Sunday.

For his part, Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha said that his side was found wanting in every aspect of the game, with batting being particularly difficult after the first 10 overs.

—Agencies

Abhishek's performance wows Ashwin, Pietersen

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Abhishek Sharma's explosive performance against Pakistan in the Asia Cup has left former players Ravichandran Ashwin and Kevin Pietersen in admiration. The 23-year-old smashed a remarkable 39-ball 74, leading India to a six-wicket victory. Ashwin hailed Sharma, stating, "This is just the beginning. He is going to blow the cricketing world apart," while predicting he could emulate Yuvraj Singh's legacy as India's finest white-ball batter. Ashwin remarked on Sharma's finesse, especially a spectacular cover drive reminiscent of MS Dhoni. Sharma now leads the tournament with 173 runs in four innings. Pietersen added, "Abhishek Sharma is NEXT LEVEL... His eye is something else! Keep the AURA, buddy!" *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Divya handed wild card for FIDE World Cup in Goa

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Teenaged Grandmaster Divya Deshmukh has been awarded a wild card for the FIDE World Cup 2025, to be held in Goa from 31 Oct to 27 Nov, following a last-minute withdrawal of one of the participants. The 19-year-old, who recently competed at the FIDE Grand Swiss, will now join 20 other Indians in the single-elimination event which will be spearheaded by world champion D Gukesh. FIDE said Deshmukh's entry came after a "last-minute cancellation of one of the participants, with Ju Wenjun and Hou Yifan having earlier declined the invitation." The biennial World Cup features 206 of the world's best players in a knockout format over three weeks. The top three finishers will qualify for the 2026 Candidates Tournament, which decides the challenger for the world title. *—PTI*

T'gana Golconda Masters to feature 123 golfers

HYDERABAD, 22 SEPT

The Telangana Golconda Masters is set to take place at the Hyderabad Golf Association, featuring top Indian golfers such as Arjun Prasad and Udayan Mane, backed by a Rs one crore prize fund. The event will also welcome international players, including Stepan Danek of the Czech Republic and Sri Lanka's N Thangaraja. A local challenge will be spearheaded by Hyderabad-based professionals and amateurs alike. HGA president BVK Raju expressed pride in hosting the event, stating, "This tournament is a great opportunity for our members to witness top-tier competition." The tournament aims to showcase the golfing talent of the region and will be broadcasted live globally. *—PTI*

Rohit to lead India Juniors in Sultan of Johor Cup Hockey

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Defender Rohit will lead the Indian junior hockey team in the Sultan of Johor Cup in Malaysia from 11 to 18 October, seeking to improve on their bronze medal performance from the previous year. The tournament serves as preparation for the upcoming Junior World Cup in Chennai and Madurai from 28 November to 10 December. India will face Great Britain on 11 October, followed by matches against New Zealand, Pakistan, Australia, and Malaysia. Coach PR Sreejesh commented, "This tournament will be a good platform for players to test themselves against strong opponents." The squad includes goalkeepers Bikramjit Singh and Princedeep Singh, alongside skilled defenders and midfielders. *—PTI*

Lanka and Pak hope to bounce back in key clash

ABU DHABI, 22 SEPT

Reeling from early setbacks in the Super 4s, both Sri Lanka and Pakistan will be desperate to register their first win in this critical stage of the Asia Cup when they lock horns here on Tuesday.

Defending champions Sri Lanka, who breezed through the group stage unbeaten, were jolted by a four-wicket loss to Bangladesh in their Super 4 opener. The defeat not only disrupted their rhythm but also snapped an impressive eight-match winning streak in the T20 Asia Cup.

India and Bangladesh have two points each with Suryakumar Yadav's men leading the standings owing to a superior net run rate. Sri Lanka and Pakistan occupy the third and fourth spots

Match Today
Pakistan
vs
Sri Lanka
Match starts at
8.00 pm IST

Pakistan skipper Salman Agha and his side now face a must-win situation under mounting pressure. The absence of former skipper Babar Azam and senior batter Mohammad Rizwan has only deepened the batting crisis, exposing a lineup short on technique and temperament.

The bowling unit, too, has struggled. Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed, who found success against lower-ranked teams like Oman and the UAE, failed to find the right lengths against India.

Sri Lanka, despite their strong run, have their own set of issues to iron out.

A fragile middle order remains a concern, though Dasun Shanaka's counterattacking knock at No. 5 against Bangladesh offered some respite. Pathum Nissanka, the standout performer with back-to-back fifties in the group stage, has hit a rough patch.

In the bowling department, pacer Nuwan Thushara has impressed, currently standing as the fourth-highest wicket-taker in the tournament with six scalps. *—PTI*

Tough WC, but will win trophy, says Rana

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

Competing in the women's ODI World Cup at home will be challenging but the Indian team is determined to clinch the coveted trophy, spin bowling all-rounder Sneh Rana said on Monday.

The tournament co-hosts India and Sri Lanka will face off in the opening game of the competition in Guwahati on 30 September. India have never won the World Cup.

"It's going to be interesting and challenging, especially since we are going to play at home. It's a special feeling. And it's even more special for Harmandidi (Harmanpreet Kaur), as she's been playing cricket for so many years now. Our aim is to fill the trophy cabinet with a World Cup," Rana told JioHotstar.

Sneh Rana
PHOTO: PTI

The senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma remarked it will also be an "important" tournament for head coach Amol Muzumdar. "This is Amol Muzumdar sir's first World Cup," Deepti said.

"We are going to play in front of a huge crowd in India, and it's going to be a memorable campaign and we are ready for it," she added.

Both Rana and wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh credited the Women's Premier League for providing exposure to the squad. *—PTI*

Prannoy, Ayush lead India at Korea Open

SUWON, 22 SEPT

HS Prannoy will lead India's charge alongside rising star Ayush Shetty at the USD 475,000 Korea Open Super 500 badminton tournament commencing on Tuesday. With Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty opting out after reaching two consecutive finals at the Hong Kong and China Masters, Prannoy and Ayush are set to carry the national flag.

Prannoy, a bronze medallist at the 2023 World Championships, has faced early exits this season but has shown resilience against top players, achieving victories over China's Lu Guang Zu and narrowly losing to Lakshya Sen and Anders Antonsen. The 33-year-old will face a qualifier in the first round, likely meeting veteran Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in the next.

Ayush, the only Indian to secure a BWF title this season with his US Open win, opens against Su Li Yang. Kiran George faces Singapore's fifth seed Loh Kean Yew, while Anupama Upadhyaya meets fourth seed Putri Kusuma Wardani in women's singles.

—PTI

HS Prannoy
PHOTO: X

Sainz's makes Azerbaijan glory; Hamilton disappoints

BAKU, 22 SEPT

The list of Grand Prix podium finishers in 2025 now includes Carlos Sainz, Jr. It still doesn't include the driver who replaced him at Ferrari, Lewis Hamilton.

While Sainz was celebrating a third place for Williams that he called "even better" than his first in Formula 1, Hamilton was saying he "couldn't really care less" about finishing eighth as his wait for a first top-three finish at Ferrari goes on.

"Definitely disappointed to come away with nothing," Hamilton told Sky Sports after the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

Hamilton could point to some progress after starting 12th on the grid but the overall mood was disappointment after Ferrari had led the way in Friday's second practice session, only to fall back into the middle of the pack. Teammate Charles Leclerc started 10th after a crash in qualifying and ended up ninth.

"Honestly, I felt so good in the car and ultimately we went in the wrong direction with the car. But our ultimate pace in the race was just not on par with the guys up ahead of us," Hamilton said. "It was so hard to overtake here today."

For Sainz, who left Ferrari for uncertainty at a Williams team which hadn't been on the podium since 2021, his third place was a vindication of his new team's long-term plan. *—PTI*

Christian Horner finalises departure from Red Bull

Christian Horner and Red Bull say they have finalised the process of Horner leaving the team he led to eight Formula 1 drivers' titles, two months after he was removed as team principal. The team issued a statement saying that Horner would leave Monday, without giving details of any agreement.

Michael Kim
PHOTO: PTI

Kim wins French Open, LPGA tour cancelled in Arkansas

PARIS, 22 SEPT

Michael Kim secured a one-shot victory at the French Open, marking his first worldwide title in seven years, with a closing 6-under 65 and a total of 16-under 268 at Saint-Nom-La-Bretèche. The 32-year-old American became the first to win the tournament since Barry Jaeckel in 1972. "I kind of blacked out when that putt went in," said the 64th-ranked Kim, whose last win was in 2018 at the John Deere Classic.

Jeong weon Ko and Elvis Smylie both finished at 15 under after shooting 65, while five-time major champion Brooks Koepka, who started the day tied for the lead, faltered with a 68 to finish fourth, two strokes back. Meanwhile, the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship was shortened to 18 holes due to heavy rain, with Sarah Schmelzel and Minami Katsu sharing the lead at 8-under. *—PTI*

De Kock comes out of ODI retirement for Pak series

JOHANNESBURG, 22 SEPT

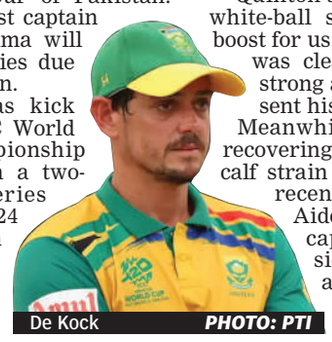
South Africa wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock has reversed his decision to retire from One Day Internationals (ODIs) and has been named in the national squads for the upcoming tour of Pakistan. However, Test captain Temba Bavuma will miss the series due to a calf strain.

The Proteas kick off their ICC World Test Championship defence with a two-match series from 12-24 October in Lahore and Rawalpindi. De Kock last featured in white-ball cricket at the 2024 T20 World Cup against South Africa in Barbados.

Following discussions with new head coach Shukri Conrad, he has been included in the squads for both T20Is and ODIs.

"Quinton's return to the white-ball space is a major boost for us," said Conrad. "It was clear he still has a strong ambition to represent his country."

Meanwhile, Bavuma is recovering from a grade two calf strain sustained on the recent England tour. Aiden Markram will captain the side in his absence. *—PTI*



De Kock PHOTO: PTI

Barca trashes Getafe; Inter beats Sassuolo

MADRID/MILAN, 22 SEPT

Barcelona defeated Getafe 3-0 in La Liga, with Dani Olmo playing a pivotal role by scoring one goal and assisting Ferran Torres on another with a clever backheel flick. Torres opened the scoring in the 15th minute, followed by a second goal from Torres in the 34th, assisted by Raphinha. Olmo sealed the victory with a close-range shot in the 62nd minute, set up by substitute Marcus Rashford. The match, held at the Estadi Johan Cruyff due to ongoing renovations at Camp Nou, brings Barcelona within two points of league leaders Real Madrid. "We had to focus on our own performance," said coach Hansi Flick.

In Serie A, Inter Milan bounced back from consecutive losses with a 2-1 victory over Sassuolo, where Federico Dimarco and Carlos Augusto scored for Inter before Walid Cheddira netted a consolation goal in the 84th minute. Inter now sits on six points after suffering defeats to Udinese and Juventus in previous matches. *—PTI*

FOR ALL THE GLORY

Dembélé, Kelly among favourites to win the prestigious Ballon d'Or

PARIS, 22 SEPT

Paris Saint-Germain forward Ousmane Dembélé and England forward Chloe Kelly are among the leading contenders to win the men's and women's Ballon d'Or award on Monday.

They are frontrunners among the 30 men's and 30 women's nominees revealed last month by France Football magazine, with the winners announced at a ceremony in central Paris.

The 28-year-old Dembélé was inspirational in leading PSG to its first Champions League title and is among a remarkable nine PSG players vying for the men's award. Goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma has since joined Manchester City but was nominated as a PSG player.

Teenage Barcelona star Lamine Yamal and Liverpool's Mohamed Salah are among the other men's candidates.

When England won the women's European Championship in July, the 27-year-old Kelly blasted home the decisive penalty in the final against World Cup winner Spain. She also won the women's Champions League with surprise winner Arsenal.

She faces competition from defender Lucy Bronze and goalkeeper Hannah Hampton — her England teammates who both play for Chelsea — and from Barcelona midfielder Aitana Bonmatí, the winner of the past two awards.

Barcelona players have won the past four women's awards.

However, Dembélé, and his fellow nominees Désiré Doué and João Neves are injured and not in the matchday squad, leaving them free to attend the ceremony.

PSG's Luis Enrique was nominated for best coach.

PSG players will be absent because the French soccer league postponed Sunday night's match between host Marseille and PSG by 24 hours due to a weather forecast.

That clashes with the Ballon d'Or ceremony and prevents most PSG players from attending.

However, Dembélé, and his fellow nominees Désiré Doué and João Neves are injured and not in the matchday squad, leaving them free to attend the ceremony.

The Ballon d'Or is voted for by journalists from the top 100 countries in the FIFA rankings for the men's award and the top 50 FIFA-ranked countries for the women's award. *— PTI*

Paris Saint-Germain forward Ousmane Dembélé
PHOTO: X